

UPSTAIRS

BULLETIN

Volume 10 Number 2.

December 24, 1969

Chicago, Illinois

An Educational Group

IT IS AS HEALTHY to enjoy sentiment as to enjoy jam. - G. K. Chesterton.

Renee Renouf in San Francisco writes in the Dance News that the San Francisco Chronicle has now expanded to include its first critic with serious dance training - ANITRA EARLE, of SC, she also attended the University of Chicago, Manner College of Music in New York and the Peabody Conservatory.

DOLORES LIPINSKI & LARRY LONG were home for a week - happy as larks with their new positions in the Washington Ballet under FREDERIC FRANKLIN. Dolores has danced, so far, Coppelia, Concerto Barrocio, Don Q, Four Temperaments and the Glazounov Variations and still learning many others. In every respect she is a true SC product loving to work - the harder the better - without conceit and adoring her contemporaries. Dolores also told us that CAMILLE MONTRESSOR a former SC pupil is appearing at the Ford Theatre in "Ah Wilderness". She was the Queen of Hearts in our "Alice in Wonderland" in 1951. PEGGY MOURNER is dancing in the New York City Opera Ballet. ELAINE PETRICOFF, a summer student gets great parts in new shows but never seems to make a show that is a hit - which is not uncommon in these days of uncreative writing in the theatre. AARON GIRARD writes that he is homesick and would like to return to the States to teach. He has a great background to recommend him - 11 years at Eugene Loring's School in L.A. - 1 year at Stuttgart - 1 year in Caracas - and 6 years in Sweden where he now is with Brian Mac Donald and Eric Bruhn. JUDY CONWAY was married to John Svolder on December 10th in Stockholm, Sweden. She will continue to work in TV. JIM MOORE is in Paris working as an assistant to Roland Petit on a new show for the Casino de Paris. He will rejoin Ballet Theatre in Los Angeles on January 24th and will be in Chicago for two weeks in March when the company is here.

John Percival, London Critic, wrote of JOHN NEUMEIER's new ballet "Frontier" for the Scottish Theatre Ballet - "the work has complete unity of style that underlines the impression of an unusually intelligent and individual creative talent". "DEBBY KRYCH PARKS recently brought into the world another boy.

Our Milwaukee concert for the Wisconsin College Conservatory on December 7th, drew a large crowd from a large area. Over 200 people driving from Chicago in a raging blizzard and many friends from CAROL & TOM TERRIEN'S School in Racine and ROBERTA REHBERG'S School in West Allis. All of the Milwaukee dance crowd turned out as well. It was BILL REILLY'S debut there, actually. It was also his first performance of Dr. Eli Duffy and if this performance is any indication, the Doctor will be around for a few more years. At the opposite end of the pole, he danced with RUTH ANN KOESUN in excerpts from "Les Sylphides". This was a high spot on the program and completely enthralled the audience, for it is Ruth Ann's perfect role. The balance of the program was a repetition of last spring's concerts with our great group of talented youngsters (average age 15). Rehearsals will begin almost immediately for the April concerts.

CHRISTMAS AT HOME

Walter Camryn

If memory serves me right, it was in December of 1919 that the entire nation was crippled by the coal strikes all through the east. Adding insult to injury, it was also one of the coldest winters on record with heavy snow and sub-arctic temperatures. Predictions were that the temperature would drop to 80 below zero and the world would freeze to death.

At the time, I was in my third year of High School at Montana State Agricultural

College in Bozeman. Our living quarters were former army barracks where the state boarded and roomed us for \$20.00 a month. The food was superlative because most of what we ate was grown on the college farms. Maybe not so much meat, but quantities of fresh vegetables and fruits. Sleeping quarters were rows of single and double beds with a row of lockers down the middle of the room and each boy with a small trunk at the foot of his bed. There were also study rooms and large recreation room where the boys had musical facilities and in the evening after dinner would gather to dance. The most popular boy was always the one who could dance the girl's part. In rural areas where there was a girl shortage men danced together quite naturally and often very well.

The cold spell had begun early in November and by the first of December, coal was at a premium. The first cut in heat was the classrooms and we went to our classes wearing overcoats. As the days wore on the predictions became more and more gruesome. The heat was now shut off in the dormitories and what was one to do but pile into bed with your neighbor. The dormitory on these frigid nights was hilarious and a bit noisy but we were warm and we may not have gone home the same innocent boys.

As the cold spell got progressively worse, the coal strike continuing, the school was eventually closed. We were told to return to our homes. Those who lived in cities had no problem but those of us who lived in rural districts were put to hardships, that today, would be unheard of. This was to be my very last Christmas at home with my family - and the last Christmas that my parents would be together as well.

Because of the situation, we were advised to take all of our entire belongings home with us. It didn't appear that the school would reopen soon. Loaded down with books, bedding, a suitcase and a small trunk was no easy task boarding a train at Bozeman for Helena. Coaches were packed as almost everyone else was going home to spend their last moments on earth with families and relatives

before we all froze to death. The past two weeks' temperatures remained consistently between 30 and 45 below zero. As there was no let-up, one was half inclined to believe that this was possibly the end.

Old No. 2 struggled along through Manhattan, Belgrade and Logan, stopping now and then while tracks were cleared of great snow drifts. At Three Forks the water pipes had frozen and we spent hours while an attempt was made to thaw them out. Here we were able to go to the station for cold sandwiches and good hot coffee. The trip from Bozeman to Helena was normally about two hours but on this occasion we were seven hours cooped up with howling children, disgruntled oldsters and drunken service men. A group of students of which I was part made an attempt at gaiety by singing everything from cowboy songs to Christmas carols.

Arriving in Helena late at night there was nothing to do but spend the balance of the night in the railroad station, curled up on a bench with my belongings. The station was crowded with other people marooned for the night and waiting for someone to call for them. The night was made bearable by the dining room remaining open. The cold wasn't quite so bad if one could get something warm in their stomach. Morning was slow in coming and the silence of the snow laden night was broken only by the constant switching of the trains in the yards in an attempt to keep the rails open and unfrozen.

At six o'clock the next morning, Frank Wolford, the driver of the Lincoln stage called for me. After a heavy breakfast of flapjacks and sausages and good hot coffee, we were ready for the first leg of the trip to Lincoln some sixty miles over the Continental Divide. The stage was a heavy duty sled driven by two large Perchon horses. The cargo was covered by a tarpaulin and securely tied by ropes to prevent the wind from ripping it apart. I was the only passenger and I sat with Frank buried under bear rugs in the front seat.

By seven thirty we began our slow plodding trip across the Prickly Pear

Valley through deep fresh snow which had fallen the night before. The horses, anxious to be on their way wore heavy blankets over their backs under the harnesses and pulled at the lines as they tromped through the snow up to their knees. By noon we were at Silver, half way to Canyon Creek, our first stop, where we fed the horses oats and had some hot soup ourselves.

The skies had been black and forboding but without any fresh snow or wind. As we proceeded on our way across the Canyon Creek Flats the wind came out of the northeast in blinding blasts and was piercing cold. I was able to bury my head in the heavy rugs wrapped around me but felt sorry for the horses who had to face the wind as Frank cursed and urged them on. The fresh snow blew in great whirlpools as we went on and great drifts began to impede our progress. At five o'clock that evening, we pulled in at the Under-seth Farm where we were to spend our first night. The horses were relieved of their harnesses and generously fed in the barn out of the elements for the night. After they were well taken care of we refreshed ourselves and had a good warm supper of beef stew and dried apple pie, Conversation at the table was limited to the storm warnings and to what we had to face on the next two days to Lincoln. No one had gone over the pass in the last three days and it was questionable if one could get through the great snow drifts that were piling up.

Canyon Creek our first stop was barely 20 miles on our way and it had taken us nine hours to go this far. Sleep came easily that night in a freezing cold bunk house with no heat.

The usual rising hour on any farm is 4:30 or 5 and I listened to all the morning activity before I braved throwing off the covers. When I did, I lost no time in dressing and getting into the farm kitchen where I could wash and use other creature comforts. Frank came in from tending the team with the news that the temperature had dropped to 47 below zero. Fortunately, the wind had ceased and there was occasional spots of sunshine but the distant mountains were crowned with dark clouds.

At eight o'clock we were on our way. In the crisp cold air the sled runners made a screeching sound as we left the more traveled farm roads. But upon entering the road we were to take, no trail was to be seen. It was as if we were pioneering a new road to an unknown land. Great puffs of steam rose from the horses nostrils as they snorted and struggled through the snow. The day was not without its scenic beauty and all went fairly smoothly until we got into the canyon leading into Wilborn, the mail stop.

In these canyons the drifts of 8 to 10 feet necessitated getting out with shovels clearing a way before we could go on. These periodic bits of activity were welcome ones for our bodies to build up heat under our heavy clothing. At noon, as we were pulling out of the yards at Wilborn a herd of deer were in feeding amongst the livestock, caging food and shelter. No farmer could deny them even though it might make them short of hay later.

No lunch ever was as welcome as the hot lunches served here. However, it was spoiled a bit with the news of a prospector's death in one of the gulches. His bent over body was frozen stiff as he apparently left his cabin for wood some 50 feet below his cabin.

From Wilborn to Stemple at the foot of the pass was the heaviest snow we were to encounter. Roads at this time were built as high as possible on the mountainside instead of down in the creek beds. The pioneer reasoning was good because the high winds blew the snow from the roads and only occasional drifts had to be surmounted or removed. The danger was if one did not keep to the narrow roads they could fall or roll down the mountainside 500 feet or more to sure death. As we got into higher altitude the clouds were down on our shoulders and fresh snow began to fall. By late afternoon we came in sight of the stage stop where we were to spend our second night.

Stemple which was near to the top of the divide was about 6000 feet above sea level. It was a winter haven for pros-

pectors and miners. Clarence Taylor, once a prospector himself, decided he needed an easier life and for some thirty years had managed a combination post office, hotel and also served meals. The service and rooms were simple and crude. Regardless of the meal or time of day you were certain to have lima beans on the table. Our room that night was cut into the mountain-side which gave it a natural protection from the cold. It had four bunks with barely room in between to dress. Blankets that had covered weary travelers for decades were not the fanciest but welcome when we finally laid our bodies down for a night's rest. Sleep came instantly.

Early next morning after a breakfast of bacon, eggs and lima beans we were on our way. From the post office at Stemple we had to climb another thousand feet before the descent over the hill and down into the Blackfoot valley. The steep decline on the other side necessitated cutting down a large lodge poll pine to drag behind us as a brake. Even with that resistance, the horses had to keep ahead of the sled and sensing they were on their last lap of a hard three day trip, they were anxious to finish the journey.

On this side of the mountain we did not have the winds to contend with so that it did not seem too cold. Most of the way we went through dense forests and the pines were heavily flocked with fresh snow and their branches hung down under the weight. The tops of the smaller trees were bent over to the ground and appeared as weird shapes under the deep snow. Enthralled by the beauty of this winter wonderland, the time passed quickly and it did not seem long before the giant Ponderosa pines came into view around the town of Lincoln.

What a relief it was to crawl out of those bear rugs to embrace my Father and brother Ray, late that afternoon. Angus was full of questions about the trip and our hardships which seemed to melt away and be forgotten in this warm presence. We still had a trip of six miles to the ranch.

Arriving at the ranch, our first chore was for the entire family to go out into the forest and select a tree for our Christmas. This was a ceremony the family always did and returning to our log cabin, the tree was set up in the living room on Christmas Eve without ornaments.

The next morning, very early, we would arrive downstairs to find it glittering with beautiful ornaments, pop corn and cranberries on strings and before presents were opened, real candles were lit. We all stood around it breathlessly admiring its beauty and before the house burned down, all the candles were snuffed out. But those few moments were magic and worth all the effort of those past three days.

Each boy had a stocking stuffed with an orange, an apple, some unshelled nuts, figs, dates, hard sugar candy, a simple toy or game, and a pair of socks. In those days Christmas was not so commercial or elaborate with gifts - but somehow it meant more. That particular Christmas in 1919 was my last one at home and the last my family would all be together. It was a very old fashioned Christmas and better than most.

Needless to say, we did not freeze to death and I returned to school soon after the holidays.